

**"Leave the Knitting to Others"?:  
An Evaluation of Sweet Briar Students Response to the War Effort**

Stephanie Pratt

January 31, 1991

Doing Sweet Briar History

"I pledge . . ."

*Stephanie Pratt*

## I. A Call to Women

In looking at World War II, it is traditional to examine sources that deal with the battles fought and politics behind them. The historical tradition has been to look essentially at political, military, and diplomatic history. However there is much more to it than that, as the recent trend to look at the war more broadly suggests. World War II was an international crisis that effected the lives of citizens around the globe, not just the men that participated in the battles. In order to get a complete picture of this crisis, it is important to look at "the historical experience of whole societies"<sup>1</sup>, not just those who claim the limelight. Once the United States entered the war, the lives of every citizen were affected, not just the men who fought in the war.

World War II changed the lives and roles of women in the United States. Due to the shortage of manpower available women were allowed to assume roles that had previously been closed to them. How then did women respond to the new opportunities now available to them? The war placed a new significance on the abilities of women. Women had to keep things going and sponsor support at home, thus altering their traditional role. In this paper I intend to look at one women's college and see how women responded to the war. Did they accept the new responsibility thrust upon them, or were they inadequately prepared to deal with it? Did the students of Sweet Briar College rise to face this crisis in the years 1941-1945, or did they simply maintain their previous way of life and assume that the war was not their concern?

---

<sup>1</sup> John Tosh, The Pursuit of History (1984) page 86

In trying to answer these questions, I have chosen to look at the Faculty Minutes and Sweet Briar News during the war years. From the Faculty Minutes it is possible to see the faculty's perception of what was important, as well as what they felt were appropriate responses for contemporary women. The Sweet Briar News contains student opinion and concerns in the form of editorials. From this source it is possible to see what the students felt their responsibilities were and if they felt they were living up to them. I have also examined the World War II Activities File and the World War II Reports File. These two files contain reports from committees set up exclusively to deal with the war on the Sweet Briar campus, as well as correspondence to and from the administration dealing with outside war agencies. From these reports student participation can be determined. The correspondences indicate what was important to the administration of the college. From the combination of these sources it is possible to see what was expected of the students and how well they lived up to their own expectation and those of their community.

This paper will begin by looking at what was demanded of the students at Sweet Briar college as the United States entered World War II. The administration and faculty took measures to help students deal with the crisis that now face them and their country, but how well did the students respond to these measures? This question will be answered in the following pages. Based on the evidence I have gathered, I will asses student participation and interpretation of the war effort at Sweet Briar.

## II. Socks for Soldiers

Awareness of World War II did not begin at Sweet Briar College with the United States entry into the war. Even before Pearl Harbor the Sweet Briar community had demonstrated concern over world events. The students opened a chapter of Bundles for Britain, Inc on campus in 1940<sup>1</sup> to assist in war relief for Britain. The faculty also created Committee on Emergency Services to survey relief activity on campus in order to make it more efficient and increase community awareness<sup>2</sup>. However, Sweet Briar students were not forced to ask themselves what they could do for their country until December 1941. At that point the focus of war activity changed. The war then became not an international charity drive to them, but something that touched all their lives. Every student had not only the responsibility of being a college student, but now the additional obligation as a citizen of the United States to contribute to the war effort. Students had to figure out with the guidance of administration what their new role was to be in the face of this crisis. As women in 1941, their options were not entirely clear. They could not simply go to battle for their country as men their age could. Instead they had to figure out how to utilize their education

---

<sup>1</sup> Wilt, Stephanie "Awakening of a Collective Consciousness: The Effects of World War II on Sweet Briar College (1985) page 1.

<sup>2</sup> World War II Reports File: Report to Faculty on Work of Committee on Emergency Services, submitted by Harriet Howell Rogers (June 3, 1941).

Note: The Committee on Emergency Services evolved into the War Service Committee following America's entry into the war.

for the national good.

As the war began for America, Sweet Briar students were told by numerous sources that their contribution to the war effort should be staying in school and making the most of their education. The first public message to the student body appeared as an editorial in the *Sweet Briar News* on December 10, 1941<sup>3</sup>. The students were told that they were to continue "Business as Usual", and this was defined as "carrying on our college work as normally as possible"<sup>4</sup>. However when President Meta Glass addressed the college a month later, her message was slightly different. She attempted to mobilize the student body by pointing out the added obligation they had to their country as the educated. As she explained it, "The people who have had the more education are the people under a greater obligation to do a harder job. Leave the knitting to others."<sup>5</sup> Thus the message to Sweet Briar students was clear, but were they ready to accept President Glass's challenge? By telling them to "Leave the knitting to others" she was demanding more of them than was traditionally expected of women in this period. She was opening the doors for Sweet Briar women to explore new avenues now open to them because they were the educated. But did the women understand this at the time?

Once the United States entered the war, the faculty began to make

---

<sup>3</sup>Note: This is the first edition of the paper after the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

<sup>4</sup> *Sweet Briar News*, anon. editorial (December 10, 1941) page 2.

<sup>5</sup>War Activities File: Convocation Speech, by President Meta Glass (January 8, 1942).

special provisions to insure that Sweet Briar women would be prepare to do more for their country than knit socks for soldiers. At the January 14, 1942 meeting regular business was abandon in order that Sweet Briar's procedure during the war could be discussed<sup>6</sup>. During this meeting such practical details as the development of air raid instruction were discussed, as well as lager topics such as the responsibilities of the student body in this national crisis. President Glass emphasized the need for students to stick to their duty as college students first and foremost. The consensus among the faculty was that Sweet Briar students could best serve their country by making the most of their education, and they should not let outside undertakings distract them from this. The faculty agreed to look into means of accelerating education for students who wanted to graduate earlier in order to facilitate those who felt they were not serving their country best by staying in school. By the end of the meeting Sweet Briar went on record as willing to accelerate graduation by accepting credit from other colleges, mainly by accepting credit from summer school programs for the first time in Sweet Briar history.

Aside from accepting summer school credit, the administration also recommended that professors and advisors meet individually with students so that the students would have some direction in

---

<sup>6</sup>Faculty Minutes (January 13, 1942)

Note: This is the first official faculty meeting after Amrica's entry into the war. All further discussion of Sweet Briar's policy in this paragraph is based on the contents of the January 13, 1942 Faculty Minutes.

plotting their own course of action in response to this crisis<sup>7</sup>. They also introduce five new courses for the 1942-1943 academic year, including Nutrition and Hygiene, Studies in the Present Crisis, Advanced Experimental Psychology and two classes in higher math<sup>8</sup>. By the very nature of the course it selected, the faculty was attempting to prepare Sweet Briar students for the changing demands that were being made on women. In the 1942-1943 academic year participation in math and science courses doubled as students attempted to prepare themselves for the need for scientific training<sup>9</sup>. The faculty also began planning for a Conference on National Relief which was to materialize on April 12-14, 1942<sup>10</sup> into a three day conference known as the Institute on National Needs on Resources. This was designed to emphasize to students the seriousness of the situation at hand, the importance of long term planning, and a greater understanding of the underlying principals behind the war<sup>11</sup>. However faculty and students did not view the importance of this conference in the same light. While the students felt that in general it was a good idea and were willing to be informed, they were not willing to sacrifice any of their spring break for it<sup>12</sup>. Because the students indicated they would not

---

<sup>7</sup>Faculty Minutes (February 4, 1942)

<sup>8</sup>Faculty Minutes (February 4, 1942).

<sup>9</sup>Wilt, Stephanie "Awakening of a Collective Consciousness: The Effects of World War II on Sweet Briar College" (1985) page 8.

Note: Students did take courses in these subjects, but did not necessarily major in them.

<sup>10</sup>President's Report to the Board of Overseers, by Meta Glass (May 12, 1942) page 4.

<sup>11</sup>Faculty Minutes (February 25, 1942)

Note: This was a special meeting of the faculty specifically so that President Glass could outline the goals of the conference on war relief.

attend if it was held then, the conference was held over a weekend and Friday classes were cancelled to insure student participation<sup>13</sup>.

Along with a change in the curriculum at Sweet Briar, new extra-curricular courses were introduced that the students could take on their own time at their own expense. These included Shorthand and Typing, Mechanical and Engineering Drawing, First Aid, Home Nursing, and Elementary [teaching] Technique<sup>14</sup>. These course were the result of interests expressed by students<sup>15</sup>. While the faculty planned for more courses in the sciences, the students elected for themselves more classes that were geared to the more traditional female role. The only exception this tradition is the Mechanical and Engineering Drawing class which never materialized because the college did not own the equipment to teach it, and the students could simply not afford it on their own<sup>16</sup>.

It is clear to see that the faculty and administration made many attempts in the early war years to broaden the student body's awareness of the war and their obligations to their country. The question that remains, however, is how well the student body

---

<sup>12</sup>*Sweet Briar News*, article by Margaret Preston, "An Ivory Tower Existance" (March 4, 1942) page 2.

<sup>13</sup>President's Report to the Board of Overseers, by Meta Glass (May 12, 1942) page 4

<sup>14</sup>Faculty Minutes (February 4, 1942).

<sup>15</sup>Faculty Minutes (February 4, 1942).

<sup>16</sup>World War II Reports File: Response to a Questionaire from the Director of the Press Bureau of Mt Holyoke College, by Miss Banister of Sweet Briar College (August 14, 1942) .

responded. The faculty raised their expectations of the students, but this does not necessarily mean that the students raised their expectations of themselves. The difference between the classes the faculty selected, and those that students chose for themselves illustrates this point. They had been told by President Glass to "Leave the knitting to others", but did they really feel comfortable abandoning that role? Did Sweet Briar women mobilize and respond to the new emphasis on their role in the face of World War II? Judging from student opinions expressed in the *Sweet Briar News*, initially at least, the answer is no.

Throughout spring 1942, there is shocking evidence of Sweet Briar student's indifference to the war. For example, one of the clubs on campus attempted a fund raiser to benefit the American Red Cross and printed an outrage editorial informing the student body that the Amherst Poker Players had contributed more to this fund raiser than the entire Sweet Briar student body put together<sup>17</sup>. The club responsible felt it was an outrage that a small local club could raise more money than a group as large as Sweet Briar<sup>18</sup>.

Another instance of student dissatisfaction with the war effort at Sweet Briar is an article by Magaret Preston that begins with a

---

<sup>17</sup> *Sweet Briar News*, editorial by Chung Mungs (February 25, 1942) page 2.

<sup>18</sup> Note: In all fairness, Sweet Briar students ultimately did contribute over one dollar apiece to this charity drive after a speech from Harriet Howell Rogers reminded them of their obligation. This is reported in an article by Phyllis Tenney in the following weeks edition of the *Sweet Briar News*.

quote she overheard on campus regarding rationing. This anonymous student said "I think it's [rationing] is a good idea. I want to know what will be rationed so I'll know what to stock up on."<sup>19</sup>. The focus of this article is one student's shock at the ignorance that existed among the student body. She went on to stress the need for student involvement, and if not involvement at least awareness. The student body of Sweet Briar had not yet absorbed the seriousness of the war. Another student felt that only two weeks after the conference on National Needs and Resources was over that students had failed to keep their awareness raised. She states:

The purpose of this weekend, I thought, was to awaken us and make us aware of events happening today, that is make us keep awake. Instead we have all gone back to our slumbers peacefully thinking of who we are going to have may day and whether the sun will be just right for sunbathing.<sup>20</sup>

Sweet Briar students may have been forced to deal with the war, but that does not mean they made it their first priority.

Further evidence of student indifference towards the war is reports of low attendance at the Emergency Service Committee sponsored lectures and discussions. As one student reports in a letter to the editor, "To judge by the number who appear at current events lectures and Emergency Service Committee discussions, it would seem as though the old inertia has set in again."<sup>21</sup> The same

---

<sup>19</sup> *Sweet Briar News*, article by Margaret Preston, "An Ivory Tower Existance" (March 4, 1942) page 2.

<sup>20</sup> *Sweet Briar News*, editorial by "A Sophomore" (April 22, 1942) page 2.

sentiment can be found in annual report of the Committee on Emergency Services which states:

The sub-committee feels it's greatest problem is to obtain informed discussion. Few students are willing to read or otherwise inform themselves before the meeting. The general committee concurs with the sub-committee's wish to attain this desirable end, but indicated that there was some value if the students wished to attend and become informed at the time of the meeting.<sup>22</sup>

The attitude reflected in this report is that Sweet Briar students who did attend these meetings were unwilling to become well informed enough before the meetings to maintain intelligent discussions. The faculty and administration provided Sweet Briar students with opportunities to better inform themselves, and the students simply did not take advantage of them.

Other programs that the students expressed interest in did not receive the desired support either. For example, forty-one students responded to the first invitation to enroll in a Red-Cross sponsored first aid class, but only seven actually completed the class<sup>23</sup>. Many students lost interest when they discovered in required forty-five hours of work for which they received no academic credit. The War Service Committee also sponsored a campaign in which students

---

<sup>21</sup> *Sweet Briar News*, editorial by S. Anderson (May 20, 1942)page 2.

<sup>22</sup> World War II Reports File: Committee on Emergency Services Annual Report 1941-1942, by Harriet Howell Rogers, Vice-Chairman and Secretary (May 20, 1942).

<sup>23</sup> World War II Reports File: War Service Committee Report to Faculty, by R. W. Short, Faculty Chairman of WSC (November 4, 1942).

were asked to assist in knitting socks and sweaters as well as rolling bandages for the Red Cross. Ninety-four students did work approximately one hundred and sixty hours on this project, but they were upstaged by forty-two members of the faculty and staff that contributed over two hundred hours<sup>24</sup>. Student participation in the war effort had yet to produce the kind of results the various committees set up to organize it had hoped to see.

The clearest expression of this sentiment is expressed in the conclusion of the War Service Committee annual report for 1942-1943 which states "we are a wartime activity trying to function in a society that has not declared war"<sup>25</sup>. This conclusion indicates a problem finding long term support for any war effort. Students were not unwilling to participate, the problem came in maintaining their support. According to a poll given by the *Sweet Briar News*, 77% of students expressed an interest in war activities at Sweet Briar<sup>26</sup>, but no where near that many actually participated. Even projects not directly aimed at the war such as the "Keep Well Crusade" sponsored by the War Service Committee received the support of only 15% of the Sweet Briar community<sup>27</sup>.

---

<sup>24</sup>World War II Reports File: War Service Committee Report to Faculty, by R. W. Short, Faculty Chairman of WSC (November 4, 1942).

<sup>25</sup>World War II Reports File: War Service Committee Anual Report 1942-1943, by R. W. Short, Faculty Chairman and Deborah Doughlas, Student Chairman (May 5, 1943)

<sup>26</sup>*Sweet Briar News*, poll results, (October 14, 1942) page 3.

<sup>27</sup>World War II Reports File: War Service Committee Report to Faculty, by R.W. Short, Faculty Chairman of WSC (November 4, 1942).

Note: The Sweet Briar Community includes faculty and students.

For students that had a greater responsibility to the war effort, Sweet Briar students did not do very well in making a strong start of it. They tended to chose on their own the traditional role of women by electing projects that involved Red Cross work and knitting. They did not seek to become truly informed on their own time, much to the dismay of the lecture and discussion committee. As discouraging as these early reports are, there is evidence that as the war progressed Sweet Briar women did rise to the occasion. While the programs did not get the student response they desired, there is another side to the story. Through editorials in the *Sweet Briar News*, some students were able to raise some valid points in their own defense.

Along with the sentiment that students are not doing enough for the war effort come some other views. There is no evidence of any feeling against the war effort, it appears as though these events had student support, if not participation. One editorial points out that

Complaints have been made that ... we have gone back to our old rut of no interest in anything except exams, term papers, complaints of too much work, dates and going away. Certainly it would be very difficult to maintain the high pitch interest... Furthermore, there is a question of whether maintaining such a thing is desired.<sup>28</sup>

The message of this editorial was that the students were not full

---

<sup>28</sup>*Sweet Briar News*, letter to the editor by C.S.P. and Cohorts (May 20, 1942) page 2.

time members of the war effort, but college students merely trying to be college students and carry on "business as usual". In spite of the international crisis, Sweet Briar women were trying to grow up and figure out their role in a very uncertain world. On one level they were told not to let the war interfere with their education, yet at the same time they are criticized for not fully participating in the war effort. As another student pointed out, "We are still trying to superimpose war activities on our normal college life."<sup>29</sup>. The war was a major adjustment for all American citizens, and Sweet Briar College needed time to adjust.

In time Sweet Briar did adjust, and became more responsive to the need of the students. One student's response to the school sponsored discussion was that the topics sponsored by the various committees meant nothing to her. Her reaction was:

... how about having some down to earth talks ... not on the post war world, but on the war as it is right now that will give us a picture of the situation right now. The only way this can happen is for some patient man who has no exalted ideas of our intellect to tell us with the aid of a map what the situation is in light of existing information and then point out what we can do about it.<sup>30</sup>

What is expressed in this editorial is a fundamental lack of education. Just as the faculty complained that the students were unable to participate intelligently in the discussions, the student

---

<sup>29</sup> *Sweet Briar News*, letter to the editor from Peggy Gordon (May 12, 1943) page 2.

<sup>30</sup> *Sweet Briar News*, letter to the editor from "Nomo Theory" (October 14, 1942) page 2.

recognize the lack of information in themselves. According to this student's claim, their lack of participation is due to lack of interest, but lack of general information. Whether this was true in all cases or not, the War Service Committee altered the structure of the discussion groups so that they centered around a current development or an outside speaker to facilitate student participation<sup>31</sup>. This change in structure increased attendance dramatically. In the 1943-1944 academic year, student attendance at War Service Committee discussions and study groups ranged anywhere from twenty-eight to one hundred and forty students<sup>32</sup>. By the 1944-1945 academic year attendance was up to anywhere from thirty-eight to one hundred and ninety students<sup>33</sup>.

While student participation in discussion increased, student interest in nursing decreased. In the 1943-1944 academic year the advanced first aid class as well as the home nursing class had to be dropped due to lack on student enrollment<sup>34</sup>. However, this was not interpreted as a setback by the War Service Committee, whose conclusion in their 1943-1944 Annual Report was more optimistic

---

<sup>31</sup>World War II Reports File: War Service Committee Report to Faculty, by R. W. Short, Faculty Chairman of WSC (November 4, 1942).

<sup>32</sup>World War II Reports File: War Service Committee Aunal Report 1943-1944, by R. W. Short, Faculty Chairman and Norma Bradley, Student Chairman (April 20, 1944).

<sup>33</sup>World War II Reports File: War Service Committee Anual Report 1944-1945, by R. W. Short, Faculty Chairman and Ellen Gilliam Student Chairman (April 16, 1945).

<sup>34</sup>World War II Reports File: War Service Committee Anual Report 1943-1944, by R. W. Short, Faculty Chairman and Norma Bradley, Student Chairman (April 20, 1944)

than the previous year; "It is the feeling of this committee that the general attitude on the part of the community members has been better than last year, as more people have come to realize the seriousness of the war."<sup>35</sup>. Students may have been less willing to learn about first aid, but they did begin to respond to the war by attempting to become educated about it. They eventually began to utilize the services set up for them by the faculty and administration once these services were modified to meet their needs.

Among the other programs that the students took advantage of was accelerated graduation. On February 13, 1943 three Sweet Briar students graduated a semester early due to the administration's policy on accepting summer school credit<sup>36</sup>. The administration also allowed two girl to leave school for a week to get married in 1942<sup>37</sup>. These girls had been engaged before the war broke out and their summer wedding plans were disrupted by the war. Their situation, however is an example of how the administration and students were able to cooperate. These women who were married yet continued their education were the start of a new generation of women. No longer was a woman expected to chose either marriage or education, the war allowed her to have both. And Sweet Briar

---

<sup>35</sup>World War II Reports File: War Service Committee Anual Report 1943-1944, by R. W. Short, Faculty Chairman and Norma Bradley, Student Chairman (April 20, 1944)

<sup>36</sup>*Sweet Briar News*, anon. article (Feb 18, 1943) page 1.

<sup>37</sup>President's Report to the Board of Overseers, by Meta Glass (May 12, 1942) page 1.

bent its policies in order to allow her that option.

There were many less formal indications student awareness of the war at Sweet Briar. Beyond formal discussions and organizations there were other ways the war effected student life. Saturday night dances were given for soldiers instead of students from the neighboring colleges<sup>38</sup>. Also the traditional elaborate class banquets and parties were turned into picnic and on campus parties and the money saved donated to the college<sup>39</sup>. There was also a rise of in the number engagements on campus<sup>40</sup> as the war touched the personal lives of Sweet Briar students. Whether they participated in the war effort actively or not, there was no escaping World War II at Sweet Briar.

The final estimate of Sweet Briar's participation in the war effort can be gathered from what the students actually did with the education they received. Despite the best of Sweet Briar's efforts to prepare women to enter this new world, did these women utilize what they learned? According to a survey given to the Class of '44, eighteen out of forty four women planned to go into a branch of the military after graduation<sup>41</sup>. This shows that Sweet Briar women

---

<sup>38</sup>War Activities File: War Time Activities at Sweet Briar, by Deborah Douglas, Student Chairman WSC 1942-1943.

<sup>39</sup>World War II Reports File: Response to Questionnaire from the Director of the Press Bureau at Mt Holyoke College, by Miss BAnister of Sweet Briar College (august 14, 1942).

<sup>40</sup>War Activities File: War Time Activities at Sweet Briar, by Deborah Douglas, Student Chairman WSC 1942-1943.

<sup>41</sup>War Activities File: Plans for the Class of 1944.

were aware, at least by 1944 of the changing role of women and the new place they had in war time society. Sweet Briar women were looking to take a more active role in the war effort than sitting home knitting socks for soldiers.

Though there are not sufficient records to gauge how many of the fourteen women of the Class of 1944 actually pursued their military careers, but there is a record of at least one hundred and thirty six Sweet Briar women who participated in the war either in the armed services or the Red Cross<sup>42</sup>. Considering graduating classes consisted on only around fifty students at Sweet Briar in the 1940's, this is an impressive contribution, especially from a woman's college. It may have taken them a while, but Sweet Briar students did eventually absorb President Glass's original message. They took their place as educated women in the community and serve their country as best they could. Ultimately they did "Leave the knitting to others".

---

<sup>42</sup>World War II Reports File: Letter by Meta Glass to Director of the Virginia World War II History Committee (June 17, 1946).

### III. Leaving the Knitting to Others

Sweet Briar students were forced to face the ever changing world that resulted from World War II. Not only did they have to look at how it effected their lives at the present, but how it would shape their future goals. They were coming into adulthood in a society that would demand more of them than ever before. Initially, it does not appear that Sweet Briar women were ready to face this new challenge. They were struggling with the dual demands of just being college students and being American citizens expected to do their part for the war. Under the guidance of President Meta Glass and the rest of the faculty and administration, they were eventually able to find their course.

Although the initial year of the war effort at Sweet Briar met with unsatisfactory student response, eventually the students and faculty were able to better communicate and Sweet Briar's war effort was modified in response to student needs. Once the students had time to adjust, the war effort at Sweet Briar was a success. This can be determined not just from student participation in various events, but in how the students chose to use what Sweet Briar gave them. It is in looking at this evidence that the conclusion lies entirely in Sweet Briar's favor. Sweet Briar women emerged from college ready and willing to take on the challenging new roles open to women. No war effort could have hoped to accomplish more than that.

## Annotated Bibliography

### Primary Sources:

Board of Overseers Reports(1941-1946): [BOR] This file is located in the Archives Office, Room 204 in the second drawer of the last file cabinet. The file contains copies of the reports submitted to the Board of Overseers by President Meta Glass. They contain changes in the college curriculum and policy, as well as short explanations as to why these changes came about. They also contain a great deal of information regarding the budget and why certain changes were necessary. They were useful in determining some of the smaller changes in policy during the war years that were not significant enough to a wide audience to be included in the Sweet Briar News.

Faculty Minutes (1906-1956): [FM] Specifically the faculty minutes from 1939 to 1944. These are located in the Fletcher Archives, Room 2 on the first table as you enter the room on about the middle of the table. They document the discussions and conclusions reached by the faculty during the monthly faculty meetings during the academic year. Only the topics of the discussions are mentioned ,there are no true records as to who said what, just a summery of the topics discussed and general conclusions. Also they are incomplete in that there are mentions of reports submitted, but the reports that were submitted or presented to the faculty are not file with the minutes themselves. With some work and a lot of luck, some of these reports can be located in other areas of the achieves. These reports do portray what the faculty felt was important in preparing student for their role in World War II.

The Sweet Briar News (1927-1979): [SB News] Specifically the editions contained in Volumes 15-17 containing the years 1941-1944. These are located in the Fletcher Archives, Room 2, on the bottom shelf of the fourth set of shelves on the left wall. It is a student publication containing the contemporary issues that concerned the student body. I primarily used the letters to the

editor to get student reactions to the war effort at Sweet Briar. It is a public source, but from these letters I was able to get personal reactions. It also provides a official record of what occurred on the Sweet Briar campus.

War Activities (1941-1945) File: [WAF] This file is located in the Achieves Office, Room 204. It is in the last file cabinet, middle drawer. It is a collection of documents regarding a range of activities relation to the war that occurred at Sweet Briar. It is impossible to generalize the contents of this file. Among many other things it contains fund raising information, War Service Committee Reports, correspondence to other colleges regarding Sweet Briar's contributions to the war effort, and many other examples of war activity at Sweet Briar. There is no logical order of anything in the file, nor any way of determining what might be in it without going through everything. In short, it is a wide assortment of Sweet Briar's activity during the war. The reports and correspondence available provide insight as to how the college view its own efforts, and the reports gave an indication of how successful these efforts were on campus.

World War II Reports File: [WWIIR] This file is located in the Archives office, Room 204. It is in the bottom drawer of the first file cabinet, filed under 'W'. It is very similar to the WAF, except that this file contains documents a little more official in nature. Mostly it contains, again in no particular order, all kinds of reports (generally made to faculty) regarding Sweet Briar's involvement in the war effort including (again) the War Service Reports, and Committee on Emergency Service Reports. This file contains some of the reports mentioned in the Faculty Minutes. Overall, this is a very useful file because most of the documents are official. From it the same kind of information can be gathered as from the World War II activities file, but a wider view can be drawn from a greater variety of sources, so both files were very useful.

Secondary Source:

Wilt, Stephanie John Sage, "Awakening of a Collective Consciousness: The Effects of World War II on Sweet Briar

College" (1985). This is a paper written by a student for this class six years ago. Stephanie and I looked at some of the same things in our research, though her paper is more an overview of war activity at Sweet Briar whereas mine is an analysis. I did not come across anything in her paper that I did not discover in my own research, however I found her paper very useful for finding specific details such as dates. Her paper was a valuable source in that it saved me a lot of time that would have been lost looking up minor details.